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Carolina Fresh Farms Serves SRS Recovery Act Projects in Two Important Ways

Recovery Act helps prevent probable layoffs due to recession

Neeses, S.C. (Nov. 16) – What started as a side business in the early 1990s to help a sodding company through the cold months of winter is, almost 20 years later, helping it weather the lean months of the recession.

The 3,000-acre Carolina Fresh Farms is headquartered in Neeses, S.C., and was awarded a Recovery Act Project contract by Savannah River Site (SRS) to supply 20 8 ½- by 24-foot long enclosed cargo trailers. Carolina Fresh Farms is also providing sprayable erosion control materials at the P-Area Reactor Seepage Basins.

Owner John Fogle, who started the business in 1954 selling coastal hay and farming row crops at his 50-acre farm in Orangeburg County, found that providing trailers could help offset a decrease in revenue during the cold months when home landscaping companies and commercial businesses were not buying or laying sod.

“When the Recovery Act money started to be awarded, the site needed more trailers,” said Richard Moore, the company’s commercial sales manager. That’s when Fogle jumped on the opportunity. To date, Carolina Fresh Farms has delivered 13 trailers.

They will be used for the site’s Portable Equipment Commodity Management Center (PECMC) to house tools, protective equipment, flashlights, bottled water, earplugs, hardhats, gloves, and other materials at locations undergoing cleanup that are part of the SRS Area Closure Project (ACP). “The trailers will be used at multiple sites during the Recovery Act Project, providing a convenient place to store and transport essential project supplies,” said Mark Ebrel, PECMC’s lead.

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“I don’t know if we’d be here without the trailer sales,” Moore said. With a decrease in the housing market, Carolina Fresh Farms was seeing fewer sales of landscaping products. “We would have had some layoffs. It has probably kept us alive during the last couple of years.

“The Recovery Act money has made a lot of difference. We look forward to the next 24 months of the Recovery Act and the money being spent in the cleanup.”

Carolina Fresh Farms’ second contribution to the Recovery Act Project – erosion control products – are being used in P Area, where it is spraying an erosion control matting of flexible growth median.

Moore hopes that as the needs of the Recovery Act Project increase as clean-up projects near fruition, Carolina Fresh Farms will be able to supply the sodding and landscaping required to finish each project. “The last thing the Savannah River Site does is permanent grassing,” Moore said. He also hopes to install silt fences at the cleanup sites. These fences use a fiber material to catch the silt associated with runoff, preventing erosion.

In addition to work at Recovery Act Project sites, Carolina Fresh Farms provides landscaping and erosion control to the Mixed Oxide Fuel (MOX) Fabrication Project Facility, Advanced Technical Training Area (ATTA), and T Area.

Carolina Fresh Farms has built its business on being resourceful. Fogle and his employees in the 1980s began growing mushrooms for the Campbell’s Soup Co. Although, the farm does not still supply mushrooms to the soup manufacturer, it did have a booth at the South Carolina State Fair, where it sold its fried mushrooms. In the early 1980s, Fogle entered the trucking business after a growing interest when his son was hired to haul sod for a competitor. The retail stores were added in the 1990s. Its seven retail stores supply yard fertilizer, landscaping stones, sod, and bulk materials for professional landscapers and homeowners. Carolina Fresh Farms has 60 full-time employees.

For more information on the Road To Recovery Tour, including future planned stops that can provide job searchers with assistance, visit www.srs.gov/recovery. For additional information on the Department of Energy’s Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site, can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>.

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Photo caption: Richard Moore, the commercial sales manager at Carolina Fresh Farms in Neeses, supplies enclosed cargo trailers to the site’s Portable Equipment Commodity Management Center. The trailers, which are currently located in N Area, will be sent to Recovery Act projects to provide essential supplies to the remote areas.